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ABSTRACT

China continues, in the 1980's to try to return its educational policy to the balance between academics and ideological work and study that existed prior to the cultural revolution. It also plans to expand colleges and postgraduate education. This change has meant a return of the key demonstration schools at every level from primary to university and a return of educational options for graduating middle school students. In order to accomplish these goals, plans for education have been integrated into larger economic goals. Changes in the economy designed to stimulate modernization and an expanded gross national product have been encouraged. As part of the integration of the economy and the educational system, vocational education has been stressed. The present educational system begins with primary school, which lasts five years and enrolls almost all children. Following this are junior and senior middle schools, which provide university preparation for the best students and vocational training for the vast majority. The present five-year plan for education includes increasing college enrollment, expanding nontraditional forms of education (such as correspondence classes), and establishing new colleges. (IS)

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1984 Educational Policy in China: Economic Interrelationships

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1984 Educational Policy in China: Economic Interrelationships

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The current educational policy in the People's Republic of China (PRC/China) remains in transition. The trend since the Cultural Revolution is toward an academic quality model. The legacy of the Cultural Revolution is still influential. Even though it is considered a catastrophe and current policy has completely reversed the Cultural Revolution policies, a restoration of pre-Cultural Revolution conditions is generally taking longer than anticipated. The current governmental goal is to restore the educational balance of academics and ideopolitical (work/study) models that existed in 1965 before the Cultural Revolution and to expand the college and post graduate educational system. This has meant a return of the key demonstration schools at every level from primary to university. This policy has meant a return of the educational options for graduating middle school students.

China continues in the 1980's to plan to accomplish this national policy and in order to be assured that present educational policy will have the fiscal resources and the job placements. China's Economic Resource Center has developed seven economic areas to be stressed during the upcoming Seventh Five Year Plan (1986-1990). Deng Xiaoping, the present leader of China, has publicly stated that this concept is the key to the success of modernization for China.

Changes have occurred since 1978 in the economic goals of China. Deng Xiaoping has: 1) opened the doors to foreign technology and trade; 2) restored family farming in the countryside; and 3) encouraged modern management in industry. These modernization goals have influenced the economic productivity of the country. The President of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Director of China's Economic Resource Center, Ma Hong, states that in 1980 the GNP was $282.3 billion. He has projected a 7.2% annual growth in farm and industry output up to the year 2000. This means a GNP of $1.14 trillion by 2000.

Within China, there are seven economic areas under GNP improvement; they include: 1) Agriculture; 2) Industry; 3) Capital construction; 4) Retail market; 5) Prices of Consumer goods; 6) Resident income; and 7) Imports/Exports. The following list expounds upon economic development:

1. Agriculture: grain, cotton, sugar, meat and poultry outputs are increasing while oil, tabacco, jute, and bluish dogbane are in planned reduction.

2. Industry: industrial output fulfilled 87.5% of the yearly plan with the first ten months of 1983. Energy production is satisfactory while light industrial output has increased by 8.1% and its items are in great demand.

3. Capital construction: key projects are under construction in the areas of energy, transportation, and housing construction. Twenty-one key projects were completed and put into production in 1983. This has increased coal, crude oil, natural gas, and iron. China is also increasing its construction of hydroelectric and

nuclear power stations so as to increase its energy capacity.

4. Retail Market: food, daily necessities, durable goods, and disposable goods demands are all increasing.

5. Prices of Consumer Goods: grain and fuel prices are steady while synthetic cloth, cigarettes, tea, liquor, radio, color television, watches, and washing machine prices are decreasing. Non-staple food, fresh vegetables, aquatic products and cotton cloth have increased 2.9%.

6. Resident Income: total wages paid have increased by 6.4% while the average peasant income has risen by 8.9%.

7. Imports/Exports: in the first 10 months imports/exports have increased by 10.1%. The increased GNP will be aided by the worldly economics in which China was awarded contracts for oil searches to Japanese, British, American and Dutch companies. In Waterloo, Iowa the John Deere Company is negotiating a ten year project with China to increase their farm productivity. The numerous examples of major international investment in China are multiplying daily.

These economic advancements have altered many Chinese concepts of modernization, and they are interested in keeping and pursuing these economic benefits. In order to better prepare the population to enter the work force, China's educational system has had to continually adjust its curriculum toward vocational educational channels since the Cultural Revolution. The educational system advocates have emphasized a national attitude of support toward vocational education and training in the past few years. Many of the changes have been resisted by more conservative

political leaders; however, educational leaders have seen the necessity for an overhaul within the entire educational system.

Primary schooling is considered basic education in the system. Currently 96% of the school age children enter a primary school. Approximately two-thirds of these children complete the full five year course. Rural schools still have a higher dropout rate than urban areas. Next year is the target date for universal primary education in those school districts that are relatively well developed economically and educationally. For less developed districts, the target date is the end of the Seventh Five Year Plan. Generally, all primary schools offer an abbreviated curriculum consisting of courses in the Chinese language, arithmetic, and ideological education.

The emphasis in the curriculum for nursery schools and kindergarten is on a well-rounded education that includes physical, intellectual, moral, and aesthetic training so that when the child enters elementary school she/he will have a good foundation for healthy, active growth both mentally and physically. In these primary schools, it is stressed to the teachers that instructors must take full account of the childrens' development and psychological age characteristics.

The primary school emphasis continues to be on the development of the whole child through Gestalt psychology; and the evaluation for graduation from primary school takes equally into account the academic grades, the ethical character of

the child and the condition of physical health. Essentially, all new national textbooks have been adopted to replace the materials edited during the Cultural Revolution with continual use of experimental texts throughout key schools in China. Academic subjects in primary school include Chinese language, arithmetic and science, as well as various other topics depending upon the location of the school. Courses in ethical values are included in the curriculum.

Within the past three years there has been a great deal of structural change in the junior and senior middle school system. There are two basic functions that the middle schools must perform: 1) provide the most outstanding students (4% to 6%) with a university preparatory foundation, or 2) provide educational training and/or job skills for the majority of students. The National Ministry of Education is trying to strengthen the junior middle school education in order to provide a higher level of basic education for all. The junior middle school classes include: youth training; general understandings of the law; historical school developments; health and physical training; ethical values; and philosophy of life. This in addition to the basic academic courses of science, mathematics and language. Currently, many of the senior middle schools have been converted to vocational schools. In order to assure a quality education to as many as possible, the government has seen a need to divide the middle schools into two types at both the junior and senior levels. One type is called the key school. Key schools were established before the Cultural Revolution. The nation's resources

are still concentrated in these key schools which has the best students, teachers and facilities. The function of a key school is to produce more and better students for higher education. Only a small percentage of the middle schools are considered key schools, and these few schools still provide 60% to 70% of all students in the universities. Students who show promise in their educational studies are enrolled in these key schools. There are not enough resources nor quality teachers to distribute quality to all middle schools, hence the decision to concentrate in a few and attempt to find alternative education for others. Hopefully, the economical advancements will provide resources for more and better middle schools.

The other type of middle school is where the transformations are occurring. More vocational training is necessary and if a student is not chosen for university study, then the government is supporting job and skill training. More of these vocational schools are being founded with the expressed desire to train as many students as possible to meet industrial and agriculture needs of China's new construction and movement toward modernization. These vocational middle schools are expected to account for over 40% of the total senior middle school enrollment by 1987. The major problem that has arisen for vocational schools is that from the average person's vantage point, China still regards a quality education as one which ends in a college degree. One reason may be that it is still the government's policy to provide jobs for students with a college degree and not to provide jobs for students with a vocational degree.

To combat some of these problems the government is encouraging the middle schools in the countryside to become more specialized in agriculture in order to meet the needs of students in the rural areas. The government has also asked its companies and businesses to encourage and promote the completion of the education and training of all the workers who did not receive the basic junior middle school education by 1985. This completion of education will ideally promote productivity. Those workers who have the basic junior middle school degree as well as senior middle school degrees are encouraged to continue to the college level. At the present, 70% of all of the enterprises and departments in China have organized worker's schools. Virtually tens of millions of workers are receiving scientific, cultural and psychological education and training.

The present five year plan for higher education was developed by the Ministry of Education and the State Planning Commission in 1982 and reiterated in 1983 and 1984. This program provides the following educational policies:

1. The number of college students is increasing by 121,000 students each year to a total of 1.76 million college students by 1987. This increase means a 43% rise over the 1982 figure of 1.153 million (presently 11 out of every 10,000 people in China are enrolled in college). Since 1949 approximately 3.54 million people have graduated from all institutes of higher learning in China.

2. A more rapid development of alternative forms of higher learning has been taking place. These forms include radio and

television classes, correspondence schools, night schools, enterprise run workers' colleges, peasants' colleges, and colleges for managerial cadres. The annual student enrollment is expected to increase from 290,000 in 1982 to 1.1 million in 1987. The total number of students is predicted to rise from 640,000 in 1982 to 2.37 million in 1987.

3. There have been concrete measures taken to facilitate expansion of higher learning. A number of new colleges have already been set up, many of them staffed by borrowing available faculty from existing universities. By the beginning of 1983, full-time universities and colleges had increased from 205 in 1949 to 598 in 1978 and to more than 720 in 1984.

These are normally centers for teaching and scientific research with a total full time teaching staff of approximately 250,000. There are 4,300 full professors, 20,500 associate professors, and 120,000 lecturers included in the University staffing. Other measures to facilitate expansion include:

1. The workers' college conducted by either large and medium sized cities or occasionally large enterprises and people's organizations. These operations now have approximately 500,000 students.

2. Educational television stations are being launched in every city with a population of over one million. These stations are offering courses in economics, finance, law, and applied liberal arts. There has been an enrollment of 800,000 in the past three years.

3. Students who live in the same city as their college are

considered as non-resident and if they choose to live on campus, they will be charged for board.

4. The Ministry of Education and the State Planning Commission in 1983 and 1984 have encouraged localities to develop whatever form of higher education is most feasible according to local economic conditions.

The main function of most university undergraduate courses is to provide a good foundation, while at the same time giving essential professional education and training to the students. There has been more emphasis given recently to strengthening and broadening the students' academic and vocational foundation to provide adaptability to a wide range of vacant jobs. The hands-on training technique which we call on the job training (OJT) has been encouraged. All of these policies have been designed to help students respond better to the many sided growth needs of a nation in need of industrialization and agronomy, and give the nation a foundation for further achievement of educational goals of producing advanced specialists. China will continue to gain educational goals because it recognizes the great importance of implementing research activities and educational theories.

One specific University in China, The Guangxi Institute for Minorities in Nanning, is attempting to meet the challenges of advancement by concentrating on the improvement of professional education. This writer has been invited twice to present a series of national educational lectures; first, concerning teacher methodologies, strategies and styles; and second,

current school administrative theories and practices. There are current plans to develop an exchange team of professors to retrain middle school administrators in current international educational theories and practices; this project will be multi-stepped with a needs survey, curricula construction, inservice programs and follow up evaluation. Since China and the U.S. are still exploring cultural, educational and scientific exchange programs, they can each benefit from experimental projects for future successes.

Current Sino/American policies have stressed exchanges between China and the U.S. in the area of education. It seems to one area where both countries can work together to help China cope with the fast moving developments in economic trends.

This policy paper concludes that China in 1984 continues to be more politically moderate with a more comprehensive educational program for the masses. China has accepted the reality that more experiential and relevant curricula at all levels of education is necessary along with increased funding for teachers and facilities. All these policy changes have limited relationships to the pre-cultural revolution days, and have become the new educational model which includes being morally, intellectually and physically prepared for the Twenty-First Century. Finally, the government's present policies are to strengthen and lengthen schooling, provide more key and vocational schools, and revise examinations and academic curricula standards. These policies are more realistically related to helping develop China's potential as an economic and political world superpower!

As an addendum, a current article in the Beijing Review (April 30, 1984, p. 30) suggests some of the following educational reforms:

1. Students need to transform their thinking about education. They need to accept more responsibility for studying and solving problems on their own.

2. A change in teaching methodology is needed. Too much time is now spent in giving detailed lectures thereby depriving students of time for individual study. Other more flexible methods should be encouraged.

3. Student motivation would increase if the subject matter discussed in class were changed. Teachers should be allowed to discuss matters not directly related to the subject.

4. The examination system should be changed to allow students to aske questions as well as answer them during the examination.

5. Science teaching methods need improvement. More individual discovery approach experiments should be encouraged.

6. The student's study habits need to change to develop their abilities to think for themselves.

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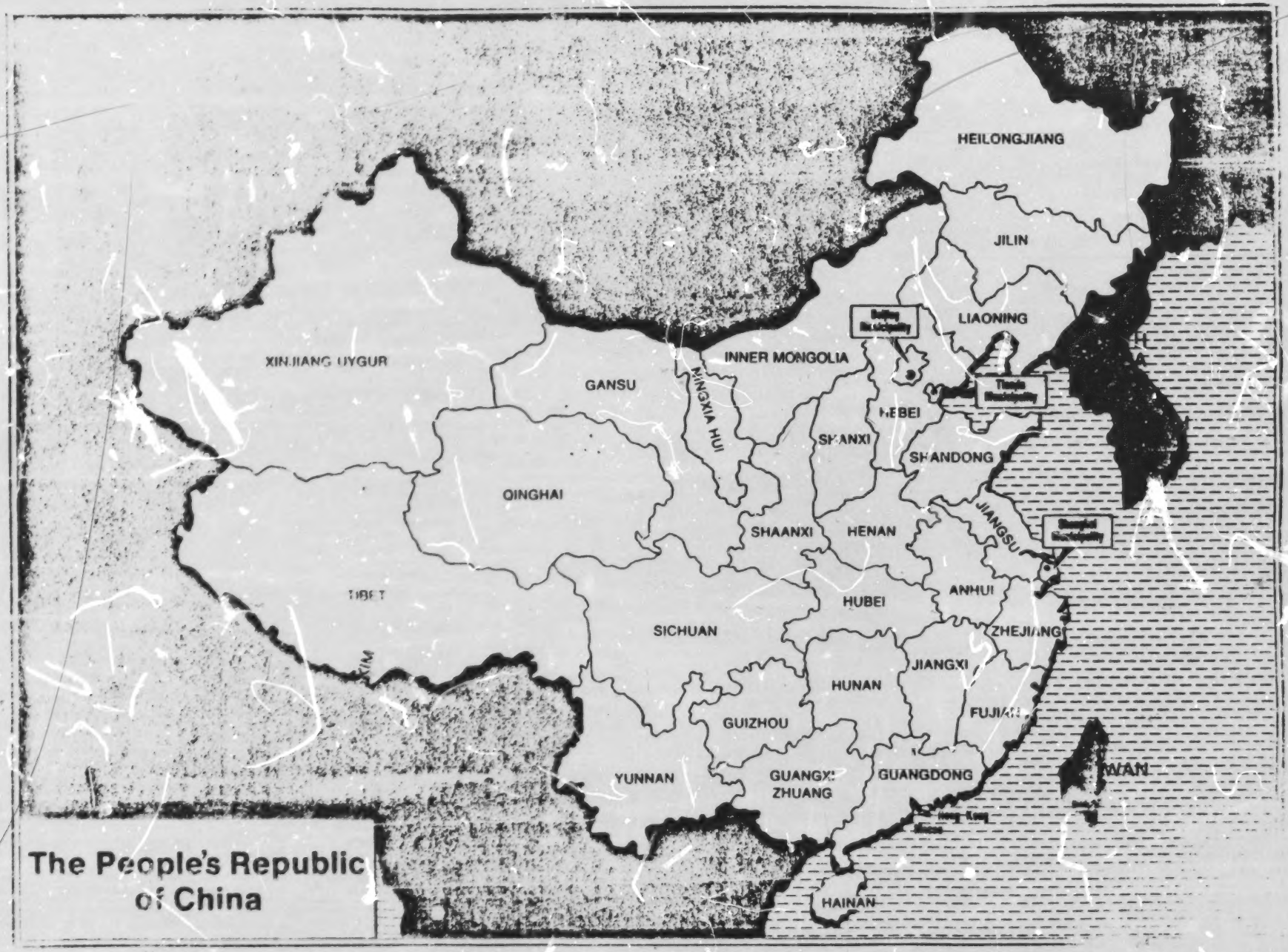

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